

for its commitment and active participation in our political system and for its contributions to our community. I especially want to thank Frank Perrucci, his wife Jean Perrucci, and CCB President Joanne Kosakowski.

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF
GUAM WATER AND ENVIRON-
MENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC
(WERI)

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the University of Guam Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific (WERI) on their twenty-fifth anniversary. WERI is the only regional water research institute dedicated to the needs of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Formally established in June of 1975, WERI has since sought solutions to technical problems associated with the location, production, distribution, and management of freshwater resources—an extremely essential function for the island communities it serves. One of fifty-five water research institutes authorized by Congress in the U.S. through the Water Research Act of 1964, WERI has expanded from a one-person operation in 1975 to a staff today of fifteen people conducting research, training, and information dissemination for Guam and the Western Pacific. They have continually strived to foster and promote research, training, technical assistance, outreach, awareness, information sharing and dissemination.

Partially funded by the federal government, WERI provides a wide array of services to the University of Guam and the people of the Pacific insular region for a fraction of what independent consultants would charge. Their research program covers all the costs for materials, equipment, supplies, computers, audio visual, and field trip expenses required by 17 graduate and 4 undergraduate courses at the University of Guam. In addition, WERI conducts a number of professional training workshops throughout the region each year. During the past three years, their faculty has published over 65 reviewed journal articles, abstracts, and technical reports while carrying on 33 separate funded research and training projects. This is in addition to their regular university teaching and service commitments.

Constructed through a matching federal grant, the WERI analytical laboratory is totally self-sustaining. As the knowledge base created by WERI is actively sought by various government agencies and offices on Guam, it generates a significant portion of its operating expenses. The governor's office, the Guam Legislature, various local commissions, the private sector, the media and the local community constantly rely on WERI's technological expertise. Consequently, the 24th and 25th Guam Legislatures set up two annual special appropriations for them to manage long term water monitoring and data collection on the island. Their reputation is such that the United States Geological Survey continues to rate

WERI as one of the top water institutes among the state and Territorial institute programs.

I extend my congratulations to the individuals who have contributed to the valuable progress and success of WERI. The dedicated people who deserve credit include WERI director, Dr. Galt Siegrist; faculty members Drs. Shahram Khosrowpanah, Leroy Heitz, Gary Denton John Jenson, and Mark Lander; Charles Guard of the research faculty; laboratory manager Harold Wood; laboratory assistants Crispina Herreria and Lucrina Concepcion; staff hydrogeologist John Jocson; and staff members Norma Blas and Dolores Santos.

WERI has made valuable contributions to the people of Guam and the Pacific region. Their work for the past twenty five years, has led to better planning, more efficient allocation and protection of our valuable water resources. On behalf of the people of Guam, I commend and congratulate the faculty and staff of the University of Guam Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific for their excellence and join in celebrating their 25th anniversary.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce a legislative proposal by Vice President GORE that would outlaw the practice of purchasing or selling Social Security numbers.

Last year, a man named Liam Youens was stalking a 21-year old New Hampshire woman named Amy Boyer. Youens reportedly purchased Amy Boyer's Social Security number from an Internet Web site for \$45. Using this information, he was able to track her down, a process that he chillingly detailed on an Internet Web site that he named after his target. Finally, last October; this demented stalker fatally shot Amy Boyer in front of the dental office where she worked. Afterwards, he turned the gun on himself.

This terrible tragedy underscores the fact that while the Social Security number was originally intended to be used only for the purposes of collecting Social Security taxes and administering the program's benefits, it has over the years evolved into a ubiquitous national personal identification number which is subject to misuse and abuse. The unregulated sale and purchase of these numbers is a significant factor in a growing range of illegal activities, including fraud, identity theft, and tragically, stalkings and now, even murders.

Today, if you open up a bank account, apply for a loan, buy insurance, get a credit card, sign up for telephone service or electric or gas utility service, you are almost invariably asked to provide a merchant with your Social Security number. Over the years, this number has become a key to verifying a person's identity. As a result, it has become increasingly clear that there are growing and serious privacy risks are being created by unrestricted commerce in Social Security numbers, and resulting abuses of this number, that require immediate legislative action.

The risks and abuses associated with misuse of the Social Security number are only being magnified by the rapid growth of electronic commerce. Right now, only \$5 billion of the \$860 billion in annual retail sales currently occur over the Internet. But that figure will continue to grow exponentially in the future. So, the question we must ask is how are we going to adjust our laws to deal with this new medium? How will we animate the New Economy with our old values—such as our cherished right to privacy?

Today, the real privacy challenge we are facing isn't Big Brother; it's Big Browser. When it comes to your financial records, there are very few protections against a financial services firm from disclosing every check you've ever written, every credit card charge you've ever made, the medical exam you got before you received insurance. And as you surf the Web, there are no rules in place to prevent various web sites from collecting information about what sites you are viewing and how long you are viewing them. If you buy anything over the Internet, that information can be linked up to other personal identifiers to create disturbingly detailed digital dossiers that can profile your lifestyle, your interests, your hobbies, or your habits. I have sponsored or co-sponsored separate legislation, H.R. 1057, H.R. 3320, H.R. 3321, and H.R. 4380, which are aimed at addressing these broader privacy problems.

But we also know that the Social Security number is an critically important personal identifier that many online and offline businesses wish to obtain about consumers. Consumers who value their family's privacy, however, have a compelling interest in not allowing this number to be used to tie together bits and pieces of information in various databases into an integrated electronic profile of their interests and behavior that can be zapped around the world in a nanosecond to anyone who is willing to pay the price.

If you do a simple Internet search in which you enter the words "Social Security Numbers," you will turn up links to dozens of web sites that offer to provide you, for a fee, with social security numbers for other citizens, or to link a social security number that you might have with a name, address and telephone number. Where are the data-mining firms and private detective agencies that offer these services obtaining these numbers? In all likelihood, they are accessing information from the databases of credit bureaus, financial services companies or other commercial firms.

If someone actually obtains a Social Security number from one of these sites, they have a critically important piece of information that can be used to locate the individual, get access to information about the individual's personal finances, or engage in a variety of illegal activities. By bringing a halt to unregulated commerce in Social Security numbers, the bill I am introducing today will help reduce the incidence of pretexting crimes, identity thefts and other frauds or crimes involving misuse of a person's Social Security number.

We need to take this action now if we are going to fully protect the public's right to privacy by preventing sales of Social Security numbers. That is why I am pleased today to be joining with the Senator from California (Ms. FEINSTEIN) in introducing Vice President GORE's legislative proposal to outlaw this practice. Our bill would make it a civil and